

# Celebrating Diversity

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I am pleased to welcome you to the National Mall in the nation's capital for the 1988 Festival of American Folklife. The success of this annual event derives from the diversity and vitality of America itself, a diversity reflected as well in America's national park system. The system encompasses 341 parks, recreation areas and historic sites and is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

Whether visiting the waterfront at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Massachusetts or standing within a cathedral of trees at Redwood National Park in California, one can admire the inspiration they provided to prior generations of Americans. Each unit in the system, including the monuments and memorials of Washington, D.C., has its tale to tell about the shaping of American culture and history.

From the hardships the land imposes and the beauty and love the land inspires, one develops an understanding of the enduring human achievements that form the foundation of our culture. Such achievements are celebrated in the yearly Festival of American Folklife and draw on the resources of America's great treasure house of culture, the Smithsonian Institution. The National Park Service is proud to co-sponsor the event in America's front yard, within sight of the National Capitol and Washington Monument and flanked by museums of art, history, science and technology. I hope your experience here will transport you to other places, other times, and leave you with a heightened sense of pride in your land, your culture and your place in the world we share.